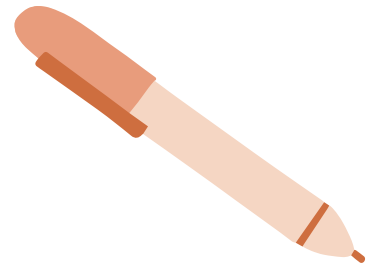
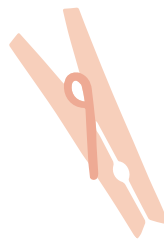


# Proprioceptive or 'Heavy Work' Activities



# What is Proprioception?

## What is Proprioception?

Proprioception is our sense of body awareness. Sensory receptors in our muscles and joints tell our brain how our bodies are moving and what each body part is doing e.g. if you close your eyes, you can feel where your arms and legs are without looking at them.

The proprioceptive system is activated when we push or pull on objects e.g. closing or opening a car door, and when the joints are compressed together or stretched apart e.g. jumping up and down. This helps us understand how much force we are using and whether we need to use more or less force e.g. when buttering bread.

## The Benefits of Proprioception:

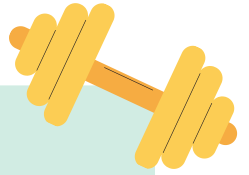
Proprioceptive activities have a calming effect on the body. It can help prevent overwhelm.

Proprioception also helps us better tolerate sensory challenges in our day by balancing the sensory input coming in from the other sensory systems e.g. we can better tolerate crowds or certain noises when we are calm.



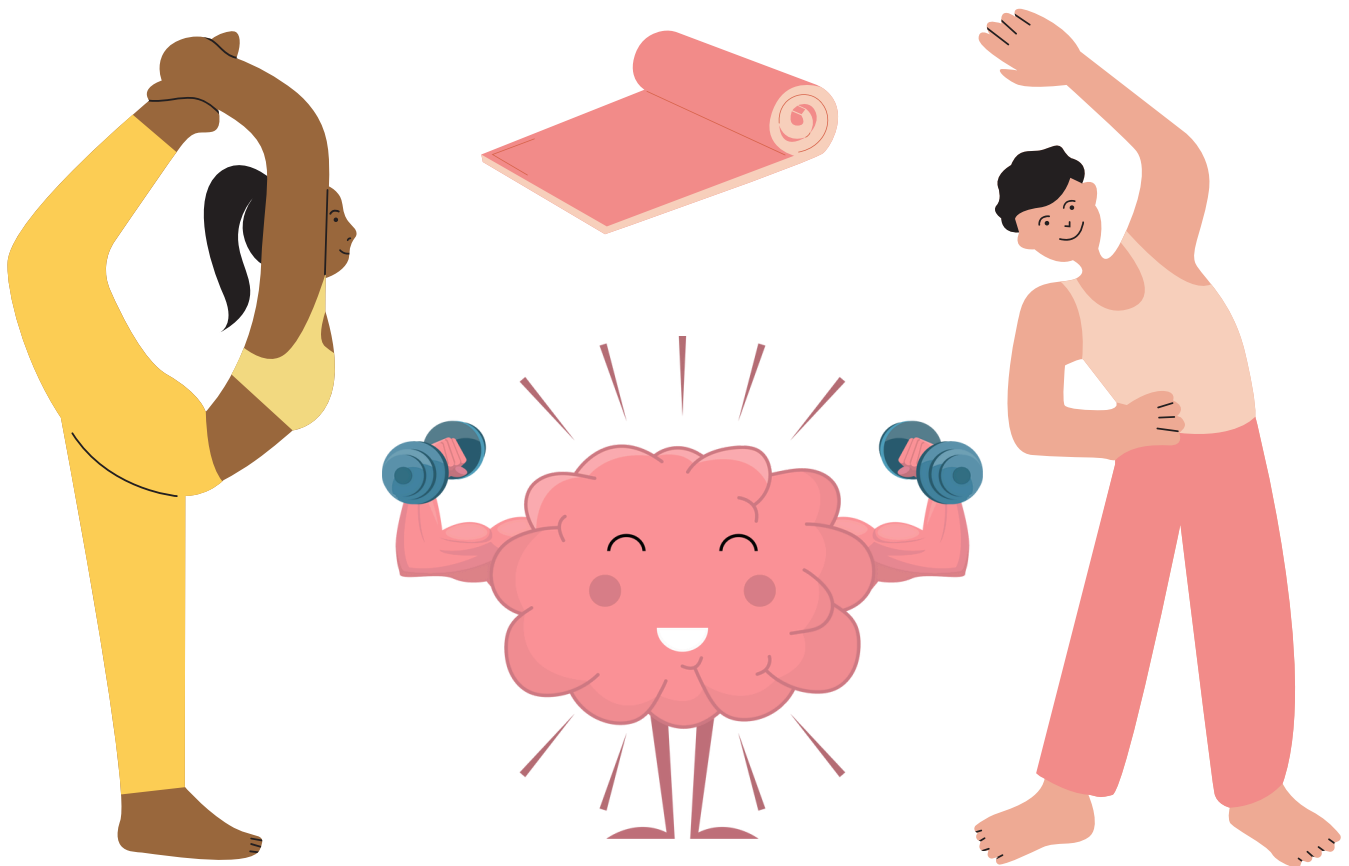
# Proprioceptive Activities

## Proprioceptive Activities:



"Heavy work" uses our muscles and joints to give us proprioceptive feedback.

Most people get proprioceptive input through engaging in activities as part of their normal daily life e.g. cooking, cleaning. However, some people do not have the same opportunities. Enabling people to experience these daily life activities can help give them the proprioception they need.



# Proprioceptive Activities

## Household Activities:

- Vacuum e.g. under the sofa cushions or stairs.
- Mop or sweep the kitchen floor.
- Scrub rough surfaces with a brush.
- Wipe the table after dinner with a large sponge and use hand muscles to squeeze.
- Dust the furniture.
- Clean the windows or doors of cupboards.
- Carry the laundry basket.
- Hang out laundry on line.
- Carry in and put away groceries.
- Push heavy doors using both hands.
- Sweep the porch or driveway.



# Proprioceptive Activities

## More Household Activities:

- Gardening e.g. rake leaves, mow the lawn.
- Shovel sand/earth into a wheelbarrow.
- Carry watering cans to water flowers, plants, trees.
- Carry a box of cans or newspapers to the recycling, rip large pieces of cardboard into small pieces for recycling or squash down cardboard boxes.
- Push a trolley around the supermarket.
- Put the bins out.
- Wash and clean out the car.
- Woodwork.
- Baking e.g. roll out dough, knead and press dough.

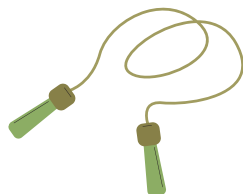
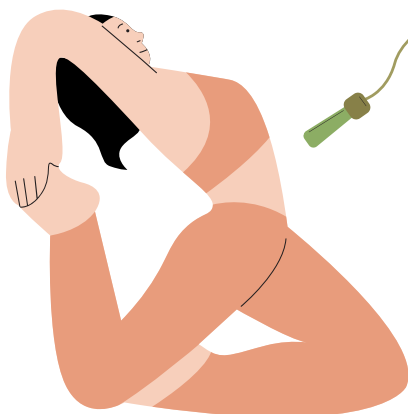


# Proprioceptive Activities

It is important to consider the person's preferences and abilities for leisure activities:

## Leisure Activities:

- Horse riding.
- Outdoor gyms e.g. pulling self-up on bars.
- Gym e.g. using weights.
- Swimming.
- Jogging.
- Walking uphill or increasing intensity of walk.
- Throwing a basketball overhead into a hoop.
- Tug of war with a rope or towel, try this in a variety of positions such as standing, sitting, or kneeling.
- Jump on trampoline.
- Lie on stomach e.g. while reading, doing a puzzle, or writing.
- Going to the beach, walking in sand.
- Working with pottery/clay.



# Proprioceptive Activities

## Community Activities:

- Jump zones.
- Climbing walls.
- Obstacle courses/activity centres.
- Community engagement e.g. tidy towns, paper rounds.
- Sports groups e.g. Special Olympics, GAA, tag rugby.
- Local classes e.g. dance, circus, yoga, zumba.
- Social farming.
- Having a job e.g. stacking shelves, washing cars.

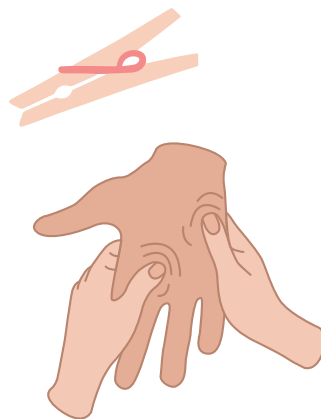
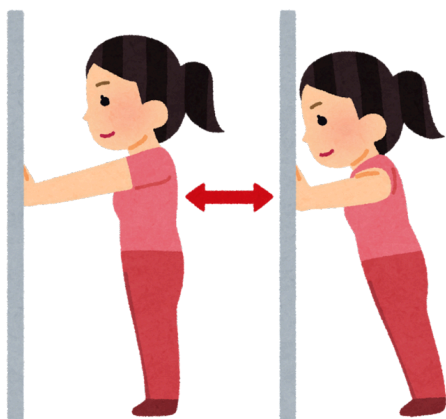
well  
done!



# Proprioceptive Activities

## Anywhere, Anytime activities: :

- Squeeze hand fidgets e.g. extra firm theraputty or hand exercisers, stress balls.
- Stretching exercise bands.
- Tight hug/Self hug: Cross arms, hold shoulders and squeeze.
- Hand massage.
- Carry a backpack with some manageable weight e.g. filled water bottle, book, objects of interest inside.
- Deep breathing exercises or blow bubbles.
- Sitting on or rolling over a gym ball.
- Press ups, or wall push ups.
- Jumping jacks.
- Marching on the spot.
- Jumping to the count of 10.
- Push the doorway. Stand in the doorway and push against the sides of it as hard as possible with one arm on each side. See how many seconds they can push.
- Wall press ups. Push against the wall as hard as you can with two hands.





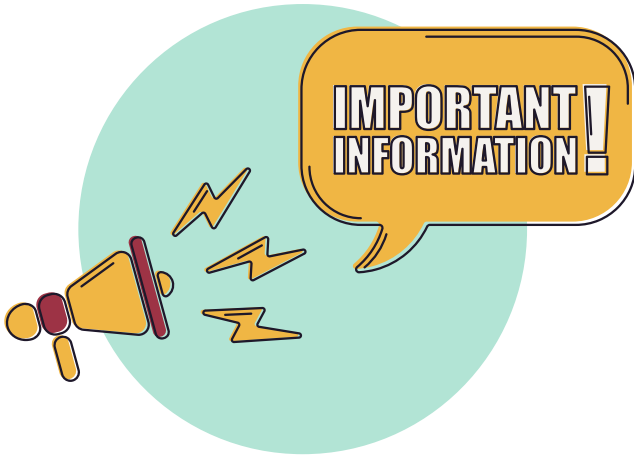
# Proprioceptive Activities

**It is important to always consider individual recommendations around diet prior to trialling these.**

## **Oral Proprioceptive Activities:**

- Provide chewy or crunchy food and snacks e.g. carrot sticks, apples, crackers, steak or dried meat sticks.
- Drink thick liquids through a large straw e.g. milkshakes, smoothies and yoghurts.
- Drink from a suction water bottle.
- Provide chewy items e.g. chewy jewellery, chewy tubes or chewing gum if appropriate.
- Trial an electric toothbrush.
- Blowing up balloons.
- Playing with musical instruments e.g. harmonica, whistles.
- Blowing cotton wool balls across a table. You can make this harder by using a straw to blow through.

# Important Information:



## Important Information:

These guidelines contain general information. They are not intended to replace individualised occupational therapy assessment and advice.



thank  
you

